

Western's FY 2001 Performance Plan—the 200-page gorilla that won't go away

by Ken Maxey

I always wanted to write a book. I just didn't think that it would end up as Western's FY 2001 performance plan. It's turned out to be an autobiography about Western; where we've been and (mostly) where we're going. It doesn't have much of a plot, and the character development is awful, but it does have a lot of pretty graphics—until you realize they all look a lot alike.

So, now that it's published, and Corporate Communications has boiled it down to a *Reader's Digest* version, who's going to read it? I know that I will spend weeks, if not months, watching the *New York Times* best seller list (nonfiction, of course), hoping against hope that my literary effort is widely recognized. Alas, I fear that I will be disappointed, and my only consolation will be if my Western colleagues (yes, you) read my 200-page gorilla or its little brother, the 36-page summary.

You see, you're part of the story. Yes, that's right. You are in there. Whether it be on the front lines of customer service or in the steamy backrooms of Western, you are a part of the Western story. You are there supporting the key results for Western!

What are those results, you ask? Read the book! You are there, creating a piece of the success we enjoy as an organization. You are there,

knowing that your effort is helping deliver tangible, valuable benefits to a large part of the American population! (Move over, Hemingway!)

OK, OK. So, I didn't like reading the "Mayor of Casterbridge" in high school and you are likely to have the same avoidance reaction to reading the FY 2001 performance plan. However, the short version (a.k.a. *Reader's Digest*) is quite readable. Do you want to know where we want to go? Read the book! Do you want to see how you fit into the "big picture?" Read the book! Would you like to know how our track record is in some key areas? Read the book!

Now, my deepest, darkest confession. This isn't my book.

The performance plan belongs to Western's senior leadership. I'm just the guy who got to ghostwrite it. You know, just like the true confession books written by ex-athletes and old actors—"My Putrid Life" by Rodney Dogooder with Blankety-Blank. I'm Blankety-Blank. But, it's been a privilege to be the ghostwriter, as we now have a tangible expression of our vision to be a premier power marketing organization.

We have a plan that meets the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act which, in a nutshell, says to develop a strategic plan and an annual performance plan, report on your performance and demonstrate how you benefit the public. Hey, easy assignment! We can actually point to the tangible benefits we deliver, which is darn better than a lot of our fellow agencies can do!

Lest I give away more of the admittedly weak plot, I'll stop here. However, I have cut a long-term deal with my publisher, the Corporate Communication folks, to have the plan serialized in the *Closed Circuit*. So, remember in a few weeks to put down the *National Enquirer* and pick up the *Closed Circuit* with the latest breaking news on Western's plans for the future.

(Note: Maxey is a senior planning advisor at Western.)

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